

births over deaths, 965. Unquestionably the birth-rate in 1918 is far lower than that in 1915. The reports from Germany entire would be equally as bad.

It is important that the morale as well as the numerical strength of a nation shall be maintained. I have no doubt of the valor of our soldiers nor of the maintenance of their health. I do have some doubt of the willingness of our people to withstand the calls that will be made on them. I have very serious doubt of our willingness to go on a basis of health conservation comparable with that of food, fuel and transportation conservation. We are being told that our cause is being seriously imperilled by our lack of ships, arms, munitions and food supplies. We are told that the shortage in these is due to shortage in labor.

For a few years just prior to the war we gained in population by excess of immigration over emigration at the rate of about 1 per cent a year—1,000,000 gain. We gain in population by excess of births over deaths at the rate of about 1 per cent—1,000,000 a year. Our industries, commerce and agriculture is based upon an expected increase of 2 per cent a year in population. One per cent of this has been cut off entirely. When we plunged into war we took nearly 2 per cent of our population and more than 2 per cent of our labor and converted them into soldiers. Naturally there is a shortage of labor.

Is there anything that can be done about it? The various health surveys that have been made show that more than 2 per cent of our population are at all times away from work because of illness. Of those that are able to work a large percentage work at low efficiency because of minor illnesses and disorders. To gain the labor necessary to acquit ourselves creditably there are several things that may be done but none is more logical, none represents so little of revolution in method, as health conservation.

In planning to eliminate waste it is highly desirable that we plan to eliminate some of the waste from preventable illness. The plan is to have some programs of the general meetings and also some of those of the sections cover programs of demography for the civilian population. The general theme will be the maintenance of the numbers and the efficiency of the civilian population.

W. A. E.

THE SANITARY RESERVE BILL.

Senate Joint Resolution No. 63, to establish a reserve of the Public Health Service, was passed by the Senate June 18, 1917, and favorably reported by the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce in the House of Representatives August 30, 1917. On March 4, 1918, it was stricken from the unanimous consent calendar upon the objection of Mr. W. H. Stafford of Wisconsin. It is now pending in the House of Representatives, being on the calendar of the "Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union" and will probably be brought up for consideration when the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce gets the call on calendar.

This resolution received the approval of the Conference of State and Territorial Health Officers at their meeting held in Washington, D. C., April, 1917, and the approval of the Conference of State and Provincial Boards of Health. The Medical Section of the Council of National Defense referred it with favorable recommendation to the Council of National Defense which recommended its enactment by Congress.

The purpose of the legislation is (1) to effectively coördinate the activities of national, state, county, and municipal health organizations; (2) to provide for the temporary appointment of additional highly qualified sanitarians in the

national health organization to meet from a health standpoint the unusual situation incident to the war; (3) to fix the status of certain officers already in the Public Health Service in order that their services may be more advantageously utilized and coördinated with the services of the temporary appointees; and, (4) to provide certain additional duties in the sanitation of ports and places in their civil relations to the mobilization of military and industrial forces.

The passage of this resolution is of the greatest importance at this time. Reasonable measures for safeguarding the health of the people are important at all times but of the greatest importance in times of war when physical fitness means so much to success. Some of the reasons for greatly increasing the civilian health forces may be mentioned as follows:

With an increase in the civilian health forces, as contemplated by this resolution, the federal, state and local health authorities may more effectually meet the increased demands which are being made upon them to protect the country from the spread of communicable diseases incident to the assembling of thousands of men from different parts of the country in camps and training stations. The immediate enactment of the legislation contemplated in this resolution is necessary in order that the organization required may be effected in time to minimize the chances of the development of serious conditions incident to summer season around national camps and shipyards.

In addition to providing funds necessary for disease prevention work Congress should bear in mind that the provisions made in the resolution for commissioning health officials in the Public Health Service Reserve are necessary under present conditions of organization and discipline in order to obtain the same degree of efficiency and obedience to orders as exists in military organization. Inasmuch as the officers of the civil sanitary reserve corps are often associated with officers in the Army and Navy, the necessity for giving them civil commissions of related rank is obvious. The operation of the resolution is limited to the period of the war. Its enactment is in the nature of a military necessity.

A. W. H.

TRAINING FOR PUBLIC HEALTH.

The director of a public health laboratory who was in search of an assistant recently complained that while many applicants were well trained in chemistry, but few were familiar with the bacteriological and pathological examinations which are part of the routine work of public health laboratories.

It is to be regretted that the study of bacteriology has not as yet found its way into many general university courses. Since this subject is intimately connected with the events of everyday life, the time will probably come when bacteriology is as frequently found even in high school curricula as physics, chemistry or general biology. From general bacteriology to pathogenic bacteriology will then be a short step.

It is encouraging to note that professional training facilities in public health are making rapid progress. Many of our readers will probably be surprised to learn that there are now about a dozen schools for health officers in this country. At least one of these gives a correspondence course.

An article in one of the coming issues will review this subject in detail.

A. W. H.